

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AAMCONSUL HONG KONG 53
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 4101

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PERP, CM, GB, CM, CG
SUBJ: CHINESE VICE PRIME MINISTER VISITS CAMEROON

REF: (A) PEKING 3977, (B) YAOUNDE 3977, (C) LIBREVILLE 2157,
(D) LIBREVILLE 2255, (E) LIBREVILLE 1890

1. INFO CONTAINED REFTEL A GREATLY APPRECIATED AS OUR
REPORT OF LANGUAGE EMPLOYED BY MADAME CH'EN MU-#HUA,
CHINESE VICE PRIME MINISTER IN CHARGE OF OVERSEAS FOREIGN
ECONOMIC RELATIONS, IN EXCHANGE OF TOASTS WITH PRESIDENT
AHIDJO LIMITED TO PRESS SUMMARY ACCOUNT AND UNCONFIRMED
VERSION ACTUAL WORDS USED REPORTED REFTEL B. OUR SOURCE
IS BEHIND CHECKED THROUGH SEPARATE CHANNELS AND FURTHER
REPORT WILL BE MADE IF WARRANTED.

2. IN FULL TEXT PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S REMARKS MADE AUGUST 12TH
BANQUET, IN ADDITION USUAL THIRD WORLD SOLIDARITY COMMENTS, HE
MAKES FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "THUS IN ADDITION THE ARAB PEOPLE
FIGHT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THEIR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
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AND THE RESPECT OF THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS.
EQUALLY THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA FIGHT FOR THE TOTAL LIBERATION OF
THE AFRICAN CONTINENT FROM COLONIALISM AND FROM RACIAL DIS-
CRIMINATION." COMMENT: IT IS UNUSUAL FOR AHIDJO TO COME SO
CLOSE TO LINKING THE PALESTINIAN AND AFRICAN LIBERATION BATTLES,
THOUGH HAPPILY HE DOES NOT MENTION ZIONISM.

3. THERE IS ALSO SOME CONFUSION WITH RESPECT TO THE EXACT ITINERARY MADAME CH'EN FOLLOWED ON HER DEPARTURE. SHE WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED TO BE GOING TO KINSHASA (REFTEL B). HOWEVER, AUGUST 16 ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAMEROON TRIBUNE STATED QUOTE ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM STATES THAT SHE WILL NEXT GO TO KINSHASA, ZAIRE, DELEGATION SOURCES MAINTAIN THAT SHE WOULD FLY BACK HOME UNQUOTE. FRENCH LANGUAGE CAMEROON TRIBUNE OF AUGUST 20-21 STATES THAT MADAME CH'EN: QUOTE MADE A STOP IN KINSHASA ON HER WAY TO AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO BURUNDI BEFORE RETURNING TO CHINA UNQUOTE. THE PAPER RECALLS THAT THE CHINESE VICE PRIME MINISTER HAD PREVIOUSLY VISITED SOMALIA AND GABON. HOWEVER, THE BBC ON AUGUST 21 ANNOUNCED THAT MADAME CH'EN STOPPED IN MOGADISCIO ON HER RETURN TO CHINA.

4. ADDITIONAL TIDBITS CONTAINED IN VARIOUS NEWS ACCOUNTS STATED THAT THE DELEGATION ACCOMPANYING HER WAS COMPOSED OF EITHER 30 OR 33 CHINESE OFFICIALS. IT WAS STATED THAT THERE WERE SOME 400 CHINESE IN CAMEROON OF WHICH HALF ARE ENGAGED IN BUILDING THE CAMEROON CULTURAL PALACE IN YAOUNDE. EIGHTY CHINESE WERE REPORTED TO BE WORKING ON THE LAGDO DAM (ALTHOUGH FRENCH CONSUL IN GAROUA TOLD ME IN MAY 1977 SEVERAL HUNDRED WERE AT DAM SITE WORKING ON BARRACKS AND PRELIMINARY EARTH WORKS). THE MEDICAL TEAM IN MBALMAYO HAS 17 CHINESE MEMBERS. IN ADDITION TO THE PLACES MENTIONED AS BEING ON HER ITINERARY IN REFTEL B, MADAME CH'EN VISITED THE MONDONI PALM OIL MILL AND THE TOLE TEA ESTATE OF THE CAMEROON DEVELOPMENT

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CORPORATION LOCATED IN SOUTHWEST PROVINCE OUTSIDE OF DOUALA AND THE DOUALA BASED CHOCOCAM CANDY FACTORY.

5. THIS IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO CAMEROON BY THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHINESE AID TO THE THIRD WORLD. IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A RETURN FOR PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S VISIT OF LAST YEAR. SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF ANY AGREEMENTS SIGNED OR PROMISES OF ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. JUDGING FROM PRESS COVERAGE, SOME AID OFFERS WERE EXPECTED, ALTHOUGH LIBERIAN AND NIGERIAN AMBASSADORS OBSERVED CHINESE DID NOT DO BUSINESS THAT WAY.

6. COMMENT: CHINESE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN CAMEROON ARE HIGHLY VISABLE, MOSTLY SHOWCASE INFRASTRUCTURE, PROJECTS WHICH WIN MUCH GOOD WILL FOR PRC. WHILE MADAME CH'EN WAS RECEIVED WITH OBVIOUS WARMTH AND ENTHUSIASM, BEFITTING SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF MAJOR POWER, UNLESS THERE SOME TANGIBLE RESULTS IN TERMS OF INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, THERE IS BOUND TO BE DISAPPOINTMENT ON THE GURC SIDE. IT IS NOTABLE THAT AS YET NO COMMUNIQUE HAS BEEN ISSUED. POLITICALLY, THE GURC HAS FOR SOME TIME ESPOUSED A CENTRAL AFRICAN DOMINO OR ENCIRCLEMENT THEORY WHICH PROCLAIMS THAT CAMEROON

IS A ROCK OF STABILITY SURROUNDED BY UNSTABLE COUNTRIES.
AS A REULST, LIKE PEELING AWAY THE LAYERS OF AN ONION, THE
GURC VIEWS ITSELF AS THE ULTIMATE TARGET OF SOVIET DESTABI-
LIZATION EFFORTS, SUPPORTED BY CUBAN AND LIBYAN SURROGATES.
THEREFORE, ANY REGIONAL INSTABILITY IS INTERPRETTED AS A
THREAT AGAINST CAMEROON ITSELF. THIS MANIFESTLY SIMPLISTIC
AND OVERLY DRAMATIC CONCEPT HAS CERTAIN OBVIOUS COMMONALITY
WHICH CHINESE VIEW OF SOVIET EFFORTS GAIN HEGEMONY IN
AFRICA. WHILE THER MAY BE A CERTAIN SUPREFICIAL AFFINITY
BASED ON THESE SHARED PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION, IN
ACTUAL PRACTICE THERE IS PROBABLY LITTLE THAT THE PRC IS
WILLING TO DO EXCEPT TO GIVE HORATORY SUPPORT, WITH
PERHAPS SOME ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC AID. THE PRC'S PREVIOUS
EFFORTS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GURC IN THE FORM OF TWO
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SHANGHAI PATROL BOATS HAVE H AD LIMITED SUCCESS IN THAT THEY
WERE UNABLE TO SUPPLY SPARE PARTS AND THE TWO BOATS ARE NOW
RUSTING HULKS, WAITING TO BE REEQUIPPED WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN
MOTORS, ARMAMENTS AND RADAR.

7. WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN MADAME CH'EN'S
VISIT TO AFRICA AND CHAIRMAN HUA'S VISIT TO BELGRADE IN TERMS
OF A FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHINESE EFFORTS TO GAIN INFLUENCE
WITH THE NON-ALIGNED IS A MATTER ON WHICH WE DEFER TO PEKING.
WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFO PEKING AND/OR
HONG KONG MAY HAVE WITH RESPECT TO AGREEMENTS SIGNED, FINAL
COMMUNIQUE OR SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS DISCUSSED.
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